

September 2006

DRAFT Bachelor of Arts in Film and Video Studies Central Washington University

Introduction

Central Washington University (CWU) is seeking approval to offer a Bachelor of Arts degree in Film and Video Studies (FVS). The proposed program would start in the winter of 2006 and would offer a degree with two options for specialization – one in Critical Studies and the other in Production. In addition, the program would offer students in other majors the opportunity to earn a Film and Video Studies minor in either Critical Studies or Visual Literacy. The program would be offered on the Ellensburg campus with daytime and evening courses and possible weekend field productions. Primary delivery mechanisms are in-person classroom and fieldwork.

Relationship to Institutional Role, Mission, and Strategic Master Plan

The proposal reflects the goals of the *2004 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education*. One goal of the Master Plan is responding to the state's economic needs. The proposed program is responsive to the state's film and video industry. According to a 2003 study by the economic consulting firm ECONorthwest, the economic impact of this industry in Washington represents \$316 million in annual income, supporting 8,033 jobs, with over \$656 million in additional economic output. State and local tax collections of \$18.4 million are directly due to film and video production.

It is unclear how much impact this program might have toward the goal for degree production because the university plans to fund the added costs of the program through internal reallocation. By 2010 – the fifth year of the program – 40 graduates are expected annually. If students already enrolled at CWU or another four-year institution in Washington simply chose this major over another course of study, the impact on the number of degrees awarded would be negligible. On the other hand, some of the comments received from external reviewers suggest the program may attract students to CWU, not only from across Washington, but from other states as well.

One of the faculty reviewers from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point stated he would have no hesitation recommending the program, not only to his students, but even to his own children. If the program succeeds in attracting students to CWU who might not otherwise attend a baccalaureate institution in Washington, the program could increase the number of degrees awarded. CWU plans to recruit students to the FVS major and to CWU both from within and outside of the state.

Program Need

Student interest in and demand for the program are indicated by the lengths to which some CWU students have gone in recent years to piece together a program of study with a similar focus. Between 2000 and 2004, 27 students were admitted to an Individual Studies Program with a focus on Film and Video Studies and related majors. In order to embark on such a course of study these students had to work with a faculty member to develop a proposed program of study which they had to submit for approval to the Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies. The administrative burden of that process was such that the institution discontinued the option, and, in 2005 began developing the current proposal.

CWU describes the level of student interest in courses currently offered in film and video studies as “significant” and reports enrollment in these courses is “high.” Inquiries from students about the prospective major have been numerous. CWU anticipates enrollment of 30 students in the first year of the program, increasing steadily to 80 students by the fifth year.

There is evidence of growing employer need for graduates in this field. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 31 percent growth in employment in motion picture and video industries from 2002 to 2012 – almost double the projected rate of increase in employment across all industries. According to Washington State’s Occupational Outlook for 2002-2012, the expected annual number of new job openings is: 19 audio-visual specialists; 51 editors; 147 graphic designers; 5 film and video editors; 29 journalists; and 5 museum technicians and conservators. The most relevant category included in the HECB *State and Regional Needs Assessment* is Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations. There are 1,200 projected annual job openings in this category from 2007-2012. The current supply of graduates in this classification is only meeting 75 percent of the demand in the job market.

Community needs that could be addressed through the program include entertainment and intellectual enrichment for the public by virtue of opportunities to attend performances, screenings, film series, exhibitions, and original productions. Students and faculty would participate in and enhance existing activities targeted toward Hispanic and Native American communities funded through GEAR UP. Finally, the internship and service learning opportunities included in the program would allow students to provide community service – likely in the K-12 school system and probably elsewhere.

Although each of the state’s six public baccalaureate institutions offer coursework in film and video studies, this program would still be somewhat unique. WSU and WWU offer only minor concentrations in this field. UW has a Cinema Studies focus in the Comparative Literature department, but this program does not include the production components and is not interdisciplinary, according to the proposal. EWU has a major and a minor program option but that program is not interdisciplinary and is narrower in scope, according to the proposal. Finally, TESC has the only other program of comparable breadth by virtue of its interdisciplinary approach. However the TESC program is not comparable in depth since it is only a one-year sequence. The proposal from CWU, therefore, concludes that no public baccalaureate institution in Washington offers a program comparable both in scope and depth.

Students already pursuing an interest in film and video through courses previously available at CWU have achieved a variety of awards and recognition. In 2005, for the tenth consecutive year, CWU students earned top video production honors at the multi-state Student Electronic Media Competition of the National Broadcasting Association for Region 6. CWU students won first place awards in several categories of the competition, including documentary film, music video, video commercials, promos and public service announcements. National awards earned by CWU students include three Telly Awards in 2003 and 2004, as well as first and second place awards for alternative programming at the 2005 Spindletop International Film Festival. CWU recently hired an additional faculty member in the Communication department and a dean in the English department. With expertise in media, film and video, these additional resources are available to further enhance program quality.

Program Description

The Film and Video Studies (FVS) major would seek to prepare graduates to go on to either further study at the graduate level in film or television or to pursue careers in creative aspects of media such as producing, editing, directing, screen writing, cinematography and acting or in journalism, arts and museum management, library science, and related occupations.

The major would require 75 credits to complete. Of the 75 required credits, five courses totaling 20 credits form the core of the curriculum which all majors would be required to take. Beyond the core, the curriculum would vary depending on the choice of specialization. In the **Production specialization**, four additional core courses are required covering topics such as TV production and production management. Another five courses (22 credits) must be selected – one each from five groups of two or three courses. These groupings of courses emphasize such topics as writing, production, history and applied activities such as practicum and cooperative education courses. The production specialization is completed with 19 elective credits which may be selected from a group of 19 courses in departments such as Film and Video Studies, English, Communication, Theater and others.

The Critical Studies specialization also starts with the 20-credit core course sequence for the major, and adds six required courses for this specialization, totaling 24 additional credits, and covering topics such as history of television and film, genre studies and ethnicity and culture in film and television. One course in international cinema and 27 elective credits chosen from a list of 26 courses from departments including English, Communication, Foreign Languages, and other departments, complete the requirements for the major in this specialization.

The new program's minors in Critical Studies and Visual Literacy were designed to be useful to students majoring in Communication, English and Education. The minor in Visual Literacy seems to offer particular value to future teachers who would work with K-12 students growing up steeped in today's rapidly evolving culture of technology and visual media. Teachers who have a foundation in film and video may be better equipped to connect with students whose a learning style is oriented toward visual forms of communicating information, as is the case in film, television and related media and technologies.

Diversity

Both faculty members primarily responsible for developing this program proposal are Native American and share a strong interest in recruiting a diverse group of students of color to CWU. Faculty who would participate in the program from the English and Communication departments are among the most diverse at the institution. The program director for FVS plans an aggressive recruiting and marketing effort targeting secondary schools with high proportions of students of color. This program would link closely with the Bridges Project currently run by the Communication department at CWU to assist Native American and Hispanic students in preparing for college.

Program Costs

State allocations for students enrolled, tuition revenue, and internal reallocation would provide funding for the program. No additional faculty or program administration staff would be hired. About two thirds of the courses needed to operate the program as planned are already in the CWU curriculum. The program would account for 1.25 FTE faculty in the first year growing to 4.0 FTE faculty at full enrollment in year five. Administrative and support staff salaries would initially consist of .5 FTE. At full enrollment, more administrative time is anticipated and the total for administration and support would grow to .83 FTE. Additional costs in the first three years of the program would include: \$3,850 for software and \$35,000 for equipment. At full enrollment, annual cost for software would be \$2,500, and \$5,000 for equipment. Finally, the budget includes \$1,500 per year for library acquisitions. Total cost of the program would be \$5,574 in the first year, and \$4,722 at full enrollment in year five. This compares to an average direct cost of \$5,992 for upper division instruction in Arts and Letters at CWU.

External Review

Three external experts reviewed the program proposal and offered support for the plan. Professor Tolstedt is a faculty member in media studies of the Division of Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and also is Director of Broadcasting at that institution, and is a board member for the Broadcast Education Association. He is impressed with the interdisciplinary structure of the program, and finds a good blend of work at beginning to advanced levels built on an excellent foundation. He believes graduates of the program would be a step ahead of other students in pursuit of graduate study or careers.

Professor Tolstedt describes two concerns: uncertainty that students would attain mastery of writing; and whether students would be sufficiently exposed to legal issues involved with film and video. In reply, CWU points out that students in the Production specialization would be required to take at least two writing courses, including one in the medium specific to their particular interests. They also note exposure to legal issues in a course required for the Production specialization entitled *Production Management for Film and Video*. CWU also clarified to HECB staff that the curriculum for the Critical Studies specialization does include a three course series of writing intensive courses that would mitigate this concern. Understanding of legal issues may be less important for the Critical Studies than the Production specialization.

Another reviewer is on the faculty in communication, focusing on media, at Pacific Lutheran University. This reviewer states that the proposal “may be unparalleled in the United States” and in regard to the proposal was effusive in a congratulatory and laudatory vein. A third reviewer, who also supports the proposed program, is a member of the faculty at New Mexico State University in the department of Journalism and Mass Communications and served several years on the faculty at the University of Cincinnati.

A detailed evaluation of the proposal also was submitted by a member of the community who is co-founder of the Ellensburg Film Festival, an independent filmmaker and screenwriter and a volunteer liaison for the Washington State Film Office. This review provides rich perspective not only on the strengths of the proposal but also aspects of the program that could be enhanced in the future. This review observes that the proposed program lacks “technology based technical training in topics such as computer animation.” The response from CWU notes that due to the high cost of equipment, advanced digital animation technology is currently beyond the scope of the proposed program but could become a focus over time as student demand and resources warrant. The expert community member concludes with the judgment that the proposal is “carefully constructed, well balanced and innovative.”

In addition, the interim provost and vice president for academic affairs at EWU sent a letter of support for the proposed program.

Staff Analysis

The proposed program would provide a unique new degree opportunity in the state, at least within the public sector. There appears to be disinterested third party corroboration for the claim by CWU that “Film and video production is clearly an area in which CWU can become a sphere of distinction.” This program could draw students to CWU from not only within the state but beyond its borders. There is clear demand for graduates with these skills. Though the numbers are small when compared to a variety of other fields, demand is growing rapidly. Worldwide multiplication of video and visual information providers, the growing need for programming, and the dramatic march of new developments in relevant technology and regulatory changes for television coming in 2009, all support the conclusion that this is a field that will continue to grow. This field will provide expanding opportunities for graduates to contribute to the economy and pursue satisfying careers.

Community benefits associated with this proposed program are unusual. The public has a strong interest in film, television and other visual modes of storytelling and sharing of information. Artistic and intellectual offerings of this type can help the institution make deeper and more satisfying connection with the community than is the case for many higher education programs.

Recommendation

Based on a careful review of the proposal and external comments provided by CWU, HECB staff recommend approval of the Bachelor of Arts in Film and Video Studies Program at Central Washington University, effective winter 2006.

RESOLUTION NO. 06-25

WHEREAS, Central Washington University proposes to offer a Bachelor of Arts in Film and Video Studies; and

WHEREAS, The proposed program would provide a unique new degree opportunity of in this state, drawing students from within the state and beyond our borders; and

WHEREAS, The program would respond to demonstrated student demand and provide them with expanded opportunities in a growing field; and

WHEREAS, The community has a strong interest in film, television and other visual modes of storytelling and sharing of information; thus, the proposed program has a strong ability to help the institution develop deep ties with the community; and

WHEREAS, There is evidence of growing employer need for graduates in this field; and

WHEREAS, The program has undergone an extensive development and review process and has received support from external experts; and

WHEREAS, The costs are reasonable.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the Bachelor of Arts in Film and Video Studies, effective winter 2006.

Adopted:

September 27, 2006

Attest:

Gene Colin, Chair

Jesus Hernandez, Secretary